

Message Text

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TAGS:SHUM,UG,EEC
SUBJECT: UGANDA AND HUMAN RIGHTS AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

1.EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARIANS TOOK THE OFFENSIVE ON TWO OCCASIONS DURING THEIR MARCH 7-11 SITTING IN STRASBOURG TO VOICE CRITICISM OF WHAT ONE DEPUTY CALLED THAT " EVIL, BLOODY,VICIOUS REGIME" IN KAMPALA.THE QUESTION POSED BY PARLIAMENTARIANS IN BOTH CASES WAS THE SAME: " WHAT FINANCIAL OR OTHER ASSISTANCE,DIRECT OR INDIRECT, WAS GIVEN TO THE RECENT CONFERENCE HELD IN KAMPALA UNDER THE LOME CONVENTION?" THE ANSWER BY JOHN TOMLINSON (REPRESENTING THE UK EC COUNCIL PRESIDENCY)WAS THAT THERE WAS NO ASSISTANCE FROM THE EC OF ANY SORT,SINCE THIS WAS SOLELY A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF ACP STATE MINISTERS TO DISCUSS THEIR FORTHCOMING MEETING WITH EC MINISTERS. PRESSED BY SIR GEOFFREY DE FREITAS (UK SOCIALIST)AS TO WHETHER THE EC COUNCIL HAS REACHED CONCLUSION ABOUT THE DENIAL OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN UGANDA,TOMLINSON REPLIED THE COUNCIL PER SE HAD NOT DISCUSSED THE QUESTION, WHICH WAS PROPERLY AN ISSUE TO BE DEALT WITH THROUGH THE EC POLITICAL COOPERATION MACHINERY.HOWEVER REPUGNANT THE ACTIONS INVOLVED,HE COMMENTED,THE EC MEMBER STATES ARE ALL SIGNATORIES TO THE LOME CONVENTION WHICH IMPOSES CERTAIN LEGAL OBLIGATIONS, AND AS LONG AS UGANDA REMAINS PARTY TO THE CONVENTION,

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THE COMMUNITY IS IN FACT BOUND TO FULFILL THOSE OBLIGATIONS.

2.THE SAME QUESTION PUT LATER TO EC COMMISSIONER CLAUDE CHEYSSON PRODUCED A CONFIRMATORY DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE TO THE UGANDA MEETING -- AS WELL AS AN

EXPRESSION OF THE COMMISSION'S " DISGUST AND INDIGNATION" OVER EVENTS IN UGANDA.THE LOME CONVENTION, CHEYSSON EXPLAINED,CONTAINED NO PROVISION WHICH MIGHT ALLOW THE EC TO BREAK OFF RELATIONS WITH A PARTICULAR STATE.A SUGGESTION FROM DUTCH SOCIALIST PATIJN THAT THE EC FREEZE RELATIONS WITH UGANDA, AS IT HAD DONE WITH GREECE UNDER THE COLONELS EVOKED CHEYSSON'S COMMENT THAT A POLICY OF ISOLATION OF UGANDA WAS NOT WORKABLE AND MIGHT MAKE MATTERS ONLY WORSE.THE ACP AGREEMENT,HE SAID, WAS IN ANY EVENT DIFFERENT FROM THE GREEK ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT,WHICH CONTAINED " RELEVANT PREAMBULAR LANGUAGE."

3. WITH REGARD TO THE FUTURE,HOWEVER,CHEYSSON POINTED OUT THAT PROVISIONS CALLING FOR THE RESPECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS COULD BE INCLUDED IN THE COMMISSION'S NEGOTIATING MANDATE WHEN THE ACP CONVENTION COMES UP FOR RENEGOTIATIONS.WHEN UK CONSERVATIVE SPICER, WITH AN EYE ON ANGOLA,ASSERTED THAT NEW COUNTRIES SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO JOIN THE ACP CONVENTION UNLESS THEY COULD SATISFY EXISTING MEMBERS OF THEIR ACCEPTABILITY,CHEYSSON REMARKED THAT OF COURSE THE ENTRY OF NEW MEMBERS REQUIRES THE AGREEMENT OF ALL PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION.IN THE MEANTIME,HE SUGGESTED THAT THE PARLIAMENTARIANS MIGHT CONSIDER SETTING UP A JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE COMPOSED OF EC AND ACP PARLIAMENTARIANS TO PRESS THEIR CONCERNs ABOUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM.

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